

September 23, 2009

To: NITC Commissioners
From: Anne Byers
Subject: eHealth Council Report

State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program. Nebraska can receive \$4 million or more through the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program. Applications are due Oct. 16. States are required to submit strategic and operational plans before implementation can begin. The eHealth Council has been working on the strategic and operational plans as well as an application. A letter of intent to participate in the program was sent to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT on Sept. 11, 2009. The State of Nebraska will be the prime recipient and fiscal agent for the grant. The Nebraska Health Information Initiative (NeHII) will act as the state designated entity for the project and will be responsible for implementation. Lt. Governor Sheehy will assume the responsibilities of the State Health IT Coordinator.

The grant program is specifically focused on health information exchange--which effectively limited potential sub-recipients to the state's health information exchanges and the Department of Health and Human Services. Seven proposals were received requesting a total of \$19 million. Two parallel processes will be used to evaluate the requests. The eHealth Plan Work Group of the eHealth Council will attempt to cooperatively whittle the requests to meet the match the amount Nebraska will receive and to incorporate the proposals into the state's application. A team of reviewers, including Anne Byers from the NITC, Keith Mueller and Marsha Morien from UNMC, Kathy Cook from the Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department, September Stone from the Nebraska Health Care Association, and Pat Darnell from Medicaid will review proposals. Kathleen Dolezal from the Governor's Policy Research Office will also have the opportunity to review proposals. Information from the reviews and the recommendations of the Work Group will be presented to the eHealth Council on Oct. 12 and the Technical Panel on Oct. 13.

The draft vision, goals, objectives and strategies are included in the meeting documents. Much progress is being made on the strategic plan. A draft copy will hopefully be available next week before the NITC meeting.

Since applications are due Oct. 16, there will probably not be time for the NITC to formally approve the strategic plan, operational plan, and application before submission.

There are a number of possible ways to deal with this, including authorizing Lt. Governor Sheehy to review and approve the final strategic plan, operational plan, and application; holding an emergency meeting; or approving the materials via e-mail.

Regional Health IT Extension Center. CIMRO of Nebraska has submitted a pre-proposal to be the Regional Health IT Extension Center for Nebraska and has broad stakeholder support. We believe that CIMRO of Nebraska was the only applicant including Nebraska in its coverage area and has an excellent chance of being funded. Regional Centers will play an important role in providing assistance to providers in adopting electronic medical record systems. The eHealth Council and NeHII will need to coordinate efforts with the Regional Center.